

“The Jews” in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective

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Abstract: The discussion of the use of the expression “the Jews” in the Fourth Gospel continues to draw the attention of many scholars. Publications abound, and this scholarly activity is justified, given the overall hostility of the Johannine Jesus to “the Jews”. Most scholarship, understandably, starts from the 71 uses of the expression in the Gospel, and attempts to formulate some historical, literary or theological explanation for the hostility between the Johannine Jesus, Johannine Christians, and “the Jews”. The present study focuses initially on other related, but less used, expressions: “Israel”, “the nation”, and “the people”. Only after this analysis are some questions asked of the use of “the Jews” in the Fourth Gospel, suggesting that the fundamental argument of the Fourth Gospel is that people from all ethnic backgrounds, Jew and Gentile, have been called to form “Israel”, the people of God.

MOST STUDIES OF “THE JEWS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL” focus upon the repeated use of the expression οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (“the Jews”) in the text. This is an understandable methodological procedure. The expression “the Jews” appears 71 times in the Gospel, generally in a negative sense. Given the presence of the Jewish people in contemporary society, the Fourth Gospel’s negative portrait of “the Jews” deserves all the attention it has received and continues to receive in contemporary scholarly and pastoral reflection upon this Gospel.¹ The use and abuse of the Fourth

1. For a summary of earlier discussions, see R. Leistner, *Antijudaismus im Johannesevangelium? Darstellung des Problems in der neueren Auslegungsgeschichte und Untersuchung der Leidengeschichte* (Theologie und Wirklichkeit 3; Bern: Lang, 1974) 15-67. Since then, see U. C. von Wahlde, “The Johannine Jews: A Critical Survey”, *NTS* 28 (1982): 33-60; J. Ashton, “The Identity and Function of the Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel”, *NovT* 27 (1985), 40-75; G. Caron, *Qui sont les “Juifs” de l’évangile de Jean?* (Recherches 35; Quebec: Bellarmin, 1997); D. Rensberger, “Anti-Judaism and the Gospel of John”, in W. R. Farmer (ed.), *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999) 130-37; U. C. von Wahlde, “The Jews’ in the Gospel of John: Fifteen Years of Research (1983-98)”, *ETL* 76 (2000), 30-55. For more complete bibliographies, see Caron, *Qui sont les “Juifs”*, 294-300, and especially R. Bieringer, D. Pollefeyt and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (eds.), *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel. Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000* (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001) 549-70. An abbreviated edition of this important volume

Gospel's description and condemnation of "the Jews" over the centuries are a matter of shame for generations of Christians.²

It may be helpful to look at some related words, within their broader literary and narrative context, which might further the discussion. The theme of Israel (Ἰσραήλ) and "Israelite" (Ἰσραηλίτης) along with the words for "people" (ὁ λαός) and "nation" (τὸ ἔθνος) may enrich the discussion of the historical, literary and theological significance of the use of the expression "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel.³ All come from the same general background of the Jewish nation and its people, despite the relative paucity of the appearance of "Israel" (4 times), "Israelite" (once), "the people" (3 times) and "the nation" (5 times) in the story. With few exceptions, this broader word-field is seldom investigated in studies of "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel. Are "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) the Jewish people as such?⁴ If so, as has often been pointed out, the Fourth Gospel is the most anti-Jewish document in the Christian canon.⁵ What is the relationship, if any, between "the Jews", "Israel", "the people" and "the nation" in the Fourth Gospel?⁶ The following

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2. See my remarks in F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina 4; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 9-11. See also P. Grelot, *Les Juifs dans l'Évangile selon Jean* (CahRB 34; Paris: Gabalda, 1995) 7-11, and especially Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 152-57.

3. The singular τὸ ἔθνος is regularly used in the NT to refer to "the nation", while in both the LXX and the NT the plural τὰ ἔθνη translates *hagōyīm*: "the pagan nations". See N. Walter, "ἔθνος, οὐς, τὰ", in H. Balz and G. Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-93) 381-83.

4. The most significant attempt to sidestep this problem is to claim that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι should always be rendered "the Judeans", generally with special attention given to the leaders. See, for this position, M. Lowe, "Who were the Ἰουδαῖοι?" *NovT* 18 (1976), 101-30. For a forceful rejection of this thesis, for both philological and exegetical reasons, see Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 15-47.

5. See, for example, the commentary of J. Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; ÖTKNT 4/1-2; Gütersloh/Würzburg: Mohn/Echter, 1984-85) 304-10, on the encounter between Jesus and "the Jews" in John 8:39b-48, described as "wohl die antijudaistische Äusserung des NT" (p. 304). See also W. H. Kelber, "Metaphysics and Marginality in John", in F. F. Segovia (ed.), *What is John?: Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (SBLSymS 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 147-54, and S. Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978) 119: "The Gospel According to John reflects the ultimate in the reflection of one side of a reciprocal bitterness, a two-sided animosity. One may accordingly explain the historical circumstances but one cannot deny the existence of a written compilation of clearly expressed anti-Jewish sentiments." See the summary from The Editors, "Wrestling with Johannine Anti-Semitism: A Hermeneutical Framework for the Analysis of the Current Debate", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti Judaism*, 5-17; C. G. Lingard, *The Problems of Jewish Christians in the Johannine Community* (Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologica 73; Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001) 355-69; and especially S. Motyer, *Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and 'the Jews'* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; London: Paternoster Press, 1997) and U. von Wahlde, "'You Are of Your Father the Devil' in Its Context: Stereotyped Apocalyptic Polemic in John 8:38-47", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism*, 418-44.

6. The plural τὰ ἔθνη, used across the biblical literature to indicate "the Gentiles" (see above, note 3), never appears in the Gospel of John. On the possible significance of this,

study will focus upon the Fourth Evangelist's use of the less frequent expressions, and from there make some tentative suggestions concerning the difficult and as yet unresolved question of the literary and theological function of "the Jews" in the Gospel.⁷

ISRAEL, THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION

Some thirty years ago Severino A. Pancaro published two essays which remain a valuable point of reference in any discussion of "Israel", "Israelite", "the people", and "the nation".⁸ Essential to Pancaro's argument was his conviction, based on his doctoral research at the University of Münster, that the author of the Fourth Gospel was a Jew, writing for Jewish readers.⁹ In short, Pancaro suggests that toward the end of the first Christian century, the Fourth Evangelist reacted against mainstream Judaism, now a Synagogue-centered community, which claimed anyone who believed that Jesus was the Christ no longer belonged to Israel (see 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). John transforms the notion of "Israel" into the broader idea of a people of God. For Pancaro, the use of "Israel", "the people", and "the nation" (Ἰσραήλ, λαός and ἔθνος) is to be sharply distinguished from the use of "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). The privilege of being "the people of God" no longer belongs to the Jewish

and the lack of other explicit reference to the Gentiles, see J. Frey, "Heiden – Griechen – Gotteskinder. Zu Gestalt und Funktion der Rede von den Heiden im 4. Evangelium", in R. Feldmeier and U. Heckel (eds.), *Die Heiden: Juden, Christen und das Problem des Fremden* (WUNT 70; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994) 230-31. For a careful study of "the nations" in the New Testament, warning against the importation of a modern concept into a very different world, see N. A. Dahl, "Nations in the New Testament", in M. E. Glasswell and E. H. Fasholé-Luke (eds.), *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World. Essays in Honour of Harry Sawyerr* (London: SPCK, 1974) 54-68.

7. I am aware that the final text of the Fourth Gospel was a long time in the making, and that evidence of stages of development and later redactional touches to the text can be identified. However, the following study attempts to uncover the functions of "Israel", "the people" and "the Jews" as they appear within the narrative fabric of the final text. On this, see F. J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 1-22; Moloney, *John*, 11-20. For attempts to explain the inconsistent use of "the Jews" on the basis of various editions of the Fourth Gospel, see U. C. von Wahlde, "The Gospel of John and the Presentation of Jews and Judaism" in D. P. Effroymsen, E. J. Fisher, and L. Klenicki (eds.), *Within Context: Essays on Jews and Judaism in the New Testament* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 67-84; Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 55-70. For a broader survey of attempts to resolve the problem in this fashion, see Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 123-24. Rensberger rightly remarks that these proposals "reduce the Gospel's intentional complexity by artificial means".

8. S. A. Pancaro, "'People of God' in St John's Gospel", *NTS* 16 (1969-70), 114-29; Pancaro, "The Relationship of the Church to Israel in the Gospel of John", *NTS* 21 (1974-75), 396-405. See also, Pancaro's further statement on this issue in Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel. Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John* (NovTSupp 42; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) 288-304.

9. See Pancaro, *The Law*, especially pp. 492-546.

nation as a religious, national community. Using these criteria, "only those Jews who believe in Jesus constitute Israel".¹⁰

This view has not gone uncontested, and John Painter has mounted a strong contrary case, pointing out that Pancaro's articles are inconsistent in their consideration of "the people of God". Painter insists that between the first and second articles there is an unresolved ambiguity in terms of the presence of those who come from "the nation" (τὸ ἔθνος) and are thus Jews, or whether the new people of God also includes people from the Gentile world. This is a serious shift of focus.¹¹ Much of Pancaro's first study was dedicated to indicating that the new people of God comprised both Jew and Gentile,¹² but in his second essay he can affirm, "There is no indication in the Fourth Gospel that John is thinking of or writing for Gentile Christians."¹³ Painter argues, on the basis of the background used by Pancaro (Hebrew Bible, LXX and the New Testament) that the Fourth Gospel consistently uses Ἰσραήλ, λαός and ἔθνος (1:31; 1:50; 3:10; 12:13; 11:50; 18:14; 11:48, 50, 51, 52; 18:35) to refer to the religious national community of the Jews.¹⁴ For Painter, Pancaro's identification in the Fourth Gospel of "Israel" with the Christian community, a new and true people of God, cannot be sustained: "Nothing is indicated about the status of believers by John's

10. Pancaro, "The Relationship of the Church", 404. See also Pancaro, *The Law*, 296-304.

11. See J. Painter, "The Church and Israel in the Gospel of John: A Response", NTS 25 (1978-79), 103. The shift was not noticed by J. W. Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People. The Narrative and Themes of the Fourth Gospel* (Downs Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 49. No reference is made to Painter's critique as Pryor supports Pancaro's 1969-70 position, but makes no reference to his 1974-75 essay.

12. See, for example, Pancaro, "People of God", 123: "When John explicitly speaks about the purpose of Christ's death, this purpose is always the salvation of the whole world, of all who believe and of the Gentiles in particular (cf. iii. 14ff.; x. 21; xii. 23-24, 32-33; 19. 37). Ultimately, it is the whole world that will go after him." I will attempt to use these same texts, within the larger literary and theological theme of the "gathering", to support this affirmation.

13. Pancaro, "The Church and Israel", 404. I regard this affirmation as indefensible. Many have shown that the bulk of Johannine language and symbolism can be explained against a background of sectarian Judaism (Qumran, etc.). But there is too much in this Gospel that (whatever its background) addresses the wider religious world of the late first and early second century. It cannot be dismissed. On this, see the foundational work of C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) 3-130. I agree entirely with Dodd's affirmation: "It seems therefore that we are to think of the work as addressed to a wide public consisting primarily of devout and thoughtful persons (for the thoughtless and religiously indifferent would never trouble to open such a book as this) in the varied and cosmopolitan society of a great Hellenistic city such as Ephesus under the Roman Empire" (p. 9). This takes nothing from the *essentially Jewish* origins of the tradition, and the important role Jewish Christians played in the development and eventual production of the Fourth Gospel as we now have it. But one must respect the difference between *origins* and even the *bearers* of the traditions, and the *intended audience* of the finished product. See P. Borgen, "The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations", in R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black (eds.), *Exploring the Gospel of John. In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 98-123.

14. Painter, "Church and Israel", 107-11.

use of *λαός ορ Ἰσραήλ*.¹⁵ Painter's careful work points to weaknesses in Pancaro's two essays, but from a rejection of his argument, Painter moves to claim that there is little or no notion of "the Church" in the Fourth Gospel. Johannine Christology is so dominant that there is no "self-conscious ecclesiology" in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁶ At best, he claims, the notion of a flock, under the shepherd, hearing and obeying the shepherd's word, is the only "word symbol" for a believing community.¹⁷

The Pancaro-Painter discussion worked in a strictly philological, historical-critical mode. Both used the Hebrew Bible, LXX and the places within the Johannine text where the expressions "Israel", "Israelite", "the people", and "the nation" occurred, but came up with contrasting conclusions.¹⁸ Re-reading this debate in the first years of the third millennium, it is apparent that insufficient attention is devoted to the interesting concentration of the three expressions, "Israel", "the people", and "the nation" (*Ἰσραήλ*, *λαός* and *ἔθνος*) in two locations in the Gospel.¹⁹ During the first days of Jesus' ministry three of the six uses of "Israel/Israelite" appear (1:31, 47 [Israelite], 50). At the close of the account of the raising of Lazarus, as Caiaphas makes his assessment of what is to be done with Jesus, and the narrator comments further, one of the two uses of "people" (11:50) and four of the five uses of "nation" occur (11:48, 50, 51, 52). Perhaps more attention could be devoted to the narrative setting in which these expressions appear, rather than trying to assess their national-political implications using traditional historical-critical methods. From here, it might be suggested that Painter is correct in his rejection of Pancaro's wholesale association of the Johannine use of "Israel" with the community of Johannine believers, the Church. But in his own turn, Painter may not have grasped the full potential of the Johannine narrative in his claim that the christological concentration of the Fourth Gospel is so intense that there is no room for the presentation of a believing community.

15. Painter, "The Church and Israel", 112.

16. For example, "the vine" is a traditional symbol for Israel, but in the Fourth Gospel "the vine" is Jesus. See Painter, "Church and Israel", 112.

17. Painter, "Church and Israel", 111-12.

18. See Pancaro, "People of God", 116-20; Painter, "Church and Israel", 104-107. A review of the literature since this debate indicates that, despite the never-ending (and important) interest in the Johannine use of "the Jews", little has been done since the Pancaro-Painter discussion to test whether this feature of the Fourth Gospel can be clarified by means of an assessment of the Evangelist's use of "Israel" and "the people". See, however, Frey, "Heiden", 228-68. To a lesser extent, Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People*, faces these issues, but in a more global fashion. The issues raised by the Pancaro-Painter debate are not dealt with.

19. In both studies Pancaro mentions this concentration, but does not make the further link with the theme of "gathering" which unites these expressions with the broader theological and literary agenda of the Gospel. Frey, "Heiden", 238, rightly focuses upon this concentration.

I have argued elsewhere that John 1:19-51 has been structured around a series of four "days", repeating the Jewish practice, based upon Exod 19, of four days of preparation for the celebration of the gift of the Law at Pentecost (see *Mekilta on Exodus* 19:1-2, 3-8, 9-10). The days culminate "on the third day" (see Exod 19:11, 16) as the "glory" of Jesus is manifested to the disciples (2:11; see Exod 19:16).²⁰ Many christological themes emerge across these first days, especially in the witness of the Baptist to Jesus as the Lamb of God (1:29, 36) and the Son of God (1:34). What is often not noticed is that the response of the first disciples across 1:35-49 does not match the witness of the Baptist, and certainly falls well short of the reader's awareness, gained from reading the Prologue, of Jesus' being the pre-existent Word of God who has become flesh (1:1-18). The limited faith of the disciples is corrected in vv. 50-51, and greater sight is promised to those whose faith will outstrip that of Nathanael (v. 49). Within this setting the Baptist announces that his ministry of water baptism was that Jesus "might be revealed to Israel" (v. 30). Then, promisingly, in the section devoted to the limited responses of the first disciples, Jesus describes Nathanael as "truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile".²¹

In the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist is the one sent by God to give witness to Jesus (see 1:6-8), and he never fails in the task (see already 1:15). He unerringly says things about Jesus which match what has been revealed to the reader in the Prologue (see 1:19-34; 3:25-30; see also 5:33-35). His description of his baptism with water "that he (Jesus) might be revealed to Israel" (1:31), comes within the same context as the analeptic description of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus (vv. 32-33) and the witness that "This is the Son of God" (v. 34).²² Is this use of "Israel" to be limited to the national and political reality of the Jewish people? The same question can be asked of Jesus' description of Nathanael as "truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile" in v. 47. Jesus' revelation of himself begins in vv. 50-51. Prior to the promise of the future vision of the opening of the heavens and the ascent and descent of the angels upon the Son of Man, Jesus has been in the story, but his actions have been few. He has given Peter the name "Cephas" (v. 42), and he has called Philip to follow him (v. 43). Nathanael, the initial person addressed by Jesus' self-revelation (v. 51a: "and he said to *him*"), is an Israelite, and the reason for the Baptist's ministry is vindicated. Jesus is

20. See Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 53-60. See also Moloney, *John*, 50-51.

21. All translations from the Greek are taken from Moloney, *John*, *ad loc.*

22. This passage has a disturbed textual tradition. Many witnesses (mainly Western) read "the chosen one of God" or (most unlikely) "the chosen Son of God". Both on textual grounds and on the coherence of the confession of the Baptist with the Gospel's Christology, "the Son of God" is to be read (as above). On this, see the contrasting positions of D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 152, reading "chosen one of God", and U. Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (THNT 4; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998) 46, 51, who reads "the Son of God" for the reasons given above.

revealed to Israel (see v. 31). It could be suggested that the use of "Israel" (v. 31) and "Israelite" in v. 47 indicates an audience larger than the national and political reality of the Jewish people.

This suggestion receives further support from Nathanael's use of "Israel" to articulate a faith based purely upon Jesus' telling him that he had been under a fig-tree, *immediately* after his description as "truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile" (v. 49; see v. 47). Like all the other disciples in vv. 35-49, Nathanael's understanding of Jesus as "King of Israel" falls short of genuine Johannine faith. Jesus comes to be revealed to Israel, and Nathanael is the Israelite to whom this revelation is first given (vv. 50-51). But it is incorrect to confess that Jesus is the messianic King, expected by the Jewish people. Thus, within this limited context, there is broad use of "Israel" as the recipient of the revelation of Jesus, and a limited, incorrect presentation of Jesus as the expected Jewish messianic "King of Israel". It is Nathanael's limitation of the expression "Israel" to the "religious national community of the Jews" which leads him to a mistaken understanding of Jesus.²³ The Israel and the true Israelite who are to receive the revelation of God in and through Jesus cannot be limited to that community.

A similar pattern occurs in the remaining two passages where "Israel" appears. As Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus draws to a close, he points out to "a ruler of the Jews" (3:1) that his belonging to the God-directed tradition of Israel, indeed, his being *the* teacher of Israel (v. 10) should have placed him in a position where he could understand the "earthly things" made known to him in the dialogue on the Kingdom, water and the spirit in vv. 1-9. Instead, he is dumbfounded (see v. 9). Israel has been the recipient of God's revelation, and the teacher of Israel able to glean the truth of Jesus' words. How much more difficult will it be for him to understand the "heavenly things" that Jesus will make known in vv. 13-21?²⁴ In a way that matches Nathanael's attempt to limit Jesus to "the religious national community of the Jews", Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem with a shout of praise taken from Psalm

23. See F. J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man* (2nd ed.; Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 14; Rome: LAS, 1978), 23-41; Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 70-75. Against those, including Pancaro, "People of God", 123-24; Pancaro, "The Church and Israel", 398-99, who regard Nathanael's confession as an expression of authentic Johannine faith. See Pancaro, "The Church and Israel", 399: "Nathanael is the 'type' or 'figure' of the 'true Israel' in virtue of his confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God (in the strict sense), *The King of Israel* (of the new people of God ...)." Stress in original. See also Pancaro, *The Law*, 290-302.

24. For this interpretation of the ἐπίγεια (earthly things) and ἐπουράνια (heavenly things) in v. 12, see Moloney, *John*, 94-95, 100. On vv. 11-12 as a bridge passage between vv. 1-10 and 13-21, see Moloney, *John*, 89-90. Nicodemus has been variously interpreted, from unbeliever to a symbolic participant in a eucharistic meal. See the survey, with bibliography, in F. J. Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor*. Reading John 13-21 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) 149-50. For a recent claim that he never transcends his limitations in 3:1-11, see J.-M. Sevrin, "The Nicodemus Enigma: The Characterization and Function of an Ambiguous Actor of the Fourth Gospel", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneville, *Anti-Judaism*, 357-69.

118:25-26. However, the crowd that had come to the feast, and who have already shown their superficiality (see 11:55-57), add to the Psalm, "even the King of Israel" (12:13). Jesus finds and rides the young ass (v. 14), and the narrator uses Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:14-15 (v. 15), leading to a comment that the disciples will eventually understand the significance of the event – when Jesus is glorified (v. 16). These interventions from Jesus (1:50-51) and from the author (12:14-16) offer ample indication that both the crowd and Nathanael have misunderstood who Jesus is.²⁵

Attention to the narrative setting of the use of "Israel" and "Israelite" in the Fourth Gospel produces a surprising conclusion. There are at least two levels of meaning. One is positive: Israel (see 1:31; 3:10) and an Israelite indeed (1:47) receive the revelation of God that takes place in and through Jesus. The other is negative: any attempt to limit the person of Jesus to the national religious and political expectations of the Jewish people fails properly to understand Jesus and his mission (1:49 [see vv. 50-51]; 12:13 [see vv. 14-16]).²⁶ A more contextual and narrative reading of the use of "Israel" and "Israelite" only partially vindicates Painter's more philological analysis. Pancaro is correct when he suggests that there is a shift in meaning. "Israel" and "Israelite" can no longer be limited to the national-political identity of the Jewish people. However, he attempts too much in making this claim for *all the appearances* of these expressions. There are places where a shift in the meaning of "Israel" can be found (1:31; 3:10), and other places where this is not the case, and "Israel" is given a national-political meaning, unsatisfactory for the Johannine context (1:49; 12:13). On each of these latter occasions in the narrative, Jesus corrects false understanding (see 1:50-51; 12:14-15).

A similar situation emerges when one focuses upon the uses of "nation" (11:48, 50, 51, 52; 18:35) and "people" (11:50; 18:14),²⁷ devoting attention to the immediate narrative context, along with the broader theme of the "gathering" which is present here, although this is not its first appearance (see 10:16). The theme of "gathering" is strongly present in 11:45-53, a section heavily loaded with the themes of "nation" and "people".²⁸ But 11:45-53 forms part of a broader narrative and theological complex that must be accorded due attention for a proper appreciation of its use of the expressions "nation" and "people" (ἔθνος and λαός).

25. For more detail on the background and interpretation of 12:12-19, see F. J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows. Reading John 5-12* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 183-6.

26. Against Pancaro, *The Law*, 298 n. 34. Pancaro claims that for John "the King of the Jews" is not a Christian title, while "King of Israel" in 1:49 and 12:13 is.

27. The expression λαός ("people") also appears in the pericope concerning the woman caught in adultery at 8:2. It will not be considered in the present study. On this passage, see Moloney, *John*, 258-65.

28. Neither Pancaro nor Painter has devoted sufficient attention to the heavy presence of the expressions "people" and "nation" within the context of this broader theme.

The resurrection of Lazarus (11:1-44) sets off a typically Johannine “crisis” in vv. 45-46: some believe (v. 45), but some go to the Pharisees and report what Jesus has done (v. 46). The gathering of the chief priests and Pharisees in the Sanhedrin assess Jesus as a dangerous miracle worker whose presence will arouse Roman suspicions and anger, eventually leading to the destruction of the Temple and the nation (v. 48: τὸ ἔθνος). The expression “the nation” here is clearly limited to the national, religious and political identity of the Jewish people. Caiaphas’ response to their concern, that it is expedient for them that one man should die for *the people* (ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ) and that the *whole nation* (ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος) should not perish must also be regarded, at the level of the dialogue between the chief priests and the Pharisees with Caiaphas, as referring to the Jewish people and its institutions. The further comment from the narrator, however, “He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied” (v. 51ab), lifts the assessment of the situation to another level in the overall argument of the narrative. The comment from the infallible narrator must be taken seriously.²⁹ Caiaphas’ words must not be taken on their face value, determined by purely philological and diachronic analysis. Based on the belief that the high priest had the power of prophecy, Caiaphas says more than he bargained for in foretelling that Jesus would certainly die for the nation (v. 51c: ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἔθνους),³⁰ but “to gather into one (εἰς εἶν) the children of God who are scattered abroad” (v. 52). There must be progress from the use of “nation” in v. 48, Caiaphas’ primary use of “people” and “nation” in v. 50, to “the children of God who are scattered abroad” who are added to “the nation” of v. 51. They will be gathered into one as a result of Jesus’ death. Two “gatherings” are taking place in this passage. The first is a gathering (συνήγαγον) of Jewish leaders who eventually decide that Jesus must be slain (v. 47; see v. 53), and the second a gathering (v. 52: συναγάγη) into one of the children of God who are scattered abroad. A rhetorical question can be asked: is this whole affair only about two gatherings of people from the Jewish nation – one gathering to set up his death and the other the result of that death? A further theological question follows. Is the death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel directed

29. The figure telling the Johannine story does not make mistakes, nor attempt to trick the reader in any way. For a contrary position, suggesting that the narrator regularly leads the reader down the wrong track, only to bring the reader back to the truth more persuasively, see J. L. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss. A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 82; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). See my review of this study in *AusBR* 37 (1989), 75-77. For further development of Staley's position, see Kelber, “Metaphysics and Marginality in John”, 142-6. On the “infallible narrator” in narrative theory, with special application to biblical narratives, see M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana Literary Biblical Series; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) 53-83

30. On the possibility that Caiaphas’ words are an ironic association of the death of Jesus with the positive understanding of a death for the nation that had its beginnings in Maccabean times, see Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 174-76.

only toward the gathering of the members of the Jewish nation at present scattered in the dispersion?³¹

Both Pancaro and Painter have pointed out that Greek for "the children of God who are scattered abroad" (τὰ τέκνα τοὺς θεοὺς τὰ διεσκορπισμένα) "is a technical term which traditionally refers to the Jews of the dispersion".³² But Pancaro is correct in looking to the promise that believers could become "children of God" (τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι) of 1:12 (see also 8:39). He claims, from 1:12, that the limitation of the expression to Jews in the diaspora cannot be applied to 11:52.³³ When the Fourth Gospel is read synchronically, the Prologue (1:1-18) is the hermeneutical key to the reading of the Gospel.³⁴ The universality of the promise made in 1:12-13 that those who believe would become "children of God" (v. 12) because of the unique intervention of God in and through Jesus (v. 13) determines the universality of the narrator's addition to the "prophecy" of Caiaphas in 11:51-52.³⁵ Caiaphas is no longer determining the sense of what he is saying. The words "he did not say this of his own accord" must be given their full value. If he is not speaking "of his own accord", who is speaking through his prophecy? The larger design of what God is doing in and through Jesus is articulated in Caiaphas' words in v. 50, further interpreted by the Evangelist in vv. 51-52.³⁶ Another Johannine motif, crucial to the latter half of the Gospel, reinforces this fact. In 10:16 Jesus spoke of the Good Shepherd who lays down his life to gather other sheep, which are not of the fold of Israel. They must also be brought together so that they will hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and form one flock under one shepherd. The theme of a "gathering" associated with the death of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has been introduced.³⁷ The prophecy of

31. These are the questions often not discussed by historical-critical interpretations.

32. Pancaro, "People of God", 118; Painter, "Church and Israel", 104.

33. Pancaro, "People of God", 126-29, *pace* Painter, "Church and Israel", 104.

34. See especially C. K. Barrett, "The Prologue of St John's Gospel", in *New Testament Essays* (London: SPCK, 1972), 27-48; M. Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos: Studien zum Verhältnis des Johannesprologs zum Corpus des Evangeliums und zu 1 Joh* (NTAbh N.F. 20; Münster: Aschendorff, 1988). See also, Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 23-52.

35. Well caught in Pancaro, "People of God", 120-22.

36. On the high priest as a "prophet", see C. H. Dodd, "The Prophecy of Caiaphas: John 11:47-53", in *More New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 63-66; P. Schäfer, *Die Vortsetzung vom Heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur* (SANT 28; München: Kösel Verlag, 1972) 135-39. See also Josephus, *J. W.*, 1:68-69; *Ant.* 6:115-116; 13:282-283, 299; Philo, *Spec.*, 4:191-192.

37. Scholars differ in their interpretation of the identity of the sheep not of this fold. See, for example, C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1978) 376: "The αὐλή is Israel and it contains some who are Christ's own sheep and some (the unbelieving Jews) who are not." For Brown, *John*, 1:396, Jesus' words address "the existing Church" at the time of the Evangelist. Pancaro, "The Church and Israel", 404, goes so far as to identify the two groups as "sheep who belong to this fold (metropolitan Judaism) and others who do not belong to this fold (Jews of the Diaspora)". Lingard, *The Problems of Jewish Christians*, 128-35, 146-55, identifies them as Jewish Christians. For Frey, "Heiden", 245-49, both Jew and Greek are to be gathered by the Good Shepherd into the one fold. Whatever may be the case at this stage of the narrative (and I lean toward Frey's

Caiaphas, developed by the remarks of an infallible narrator in 11:51-52 carries the theme one step further.

It develops into one of the major themes of Chapter 12. Before Jesus' entry, during which people from the Jewish nation falsely acclaim Jesus as "the King of Israel" (12:13), a plot is hatched to slay Lazarus, "because on account of him *many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus*" (v. 11). After the entry the Pharisees are perplexed, exclaiming, "You see that you can do nothing *the world has gone after him*" (v. 19). The theme of a universal gathering, from the Jewish and non-Jewish world, is explicit. In proof of the movement of the whole world toward Jesus as the passion approaches, Greeks arrive, and ask to see Jesus (12:20-21). He announces that "the hour" so long held in check (see 2:5; 7:30; 8:20), has finally arrived (12:23). The use of "the hour", now arrived, tolls across the closing pages of the story (12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27). The moment for the glorification of the Son of Man by means of his being "lifted up" (see 3:13-14; 8:28; 12:23, 32) has come. There is a close link between the arrival of non-Jews who wish to gaze upon Jesus, the coming of the hour, and the crucifixion (the "lifting up"), and the glorification of Jesus.³⁸ Jesus comments upon the hour by means of the image of a seed that must fall into the ground and die so that it might produce much fruit. Otherwise it dies alone (12:24). This cannot be the case for the death of Jesus. That event will lead to the gathering of many.

Within the context of the public ministry, this theme receives its final articulation in the dense passage, running from vv. 27-33, where Jesus speaks of the arrival of his "hour." Jesus affirms his commitment to the hour, so that he might glorify the name of the Father (vv. 27-28a). The divine voice responds from heaven, looking back across the ministry to comment that the name of God has already been glorified (see 2:11; 11:4, 40), and the promise that the consummation of that glorification is soon to come (v. 28bc). In the midst of an unwillingness to hear the heavenly voice (see vv. 29-30), Jesus announces the significance of his death: "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw everyone (πάντας) to myself" (v. 32). To eliminate the slightest doubt concerning

interpretation), the theme of "gathering" has been broached, closely associated with the death of Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (see 10:11, 15, 17). See Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 137-38.

38. For a full discussion of the identity of the Greeks, described above as "non-Jews", see H. B. Kossen, "Who were the Greeks of John XII 20?" in *Studies in John: Presented to J. N. Sevenster on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (NovTSup 24; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970) 97-110. Frey, "Heiden", 249-64, argues convincingly for the references to the {Eilhne" in 7:35 and 12:20 as clear indication that the Greeks, the Gentiles, are the recipients of the salvific effects of Jesus' death (see pp. 251-59). His attempt (following M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage. Ein Lösungsversuch, mit einem Beitrag zur Apokalypse von Jörg Frey* [WUNT 55; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1993), to identify these "Greeks" as the original recipients of the Johannine Gospel in Asia Minor (pp. 259-64) remains somewhat speculative. See my review of Hengel's study in *Biblica* 76 (1995), 270-73.

the meaning of "lifting up", the narrator adds a clarifying footnote: "He said this to show *by what death* (ποίῳ θανάτῳ) he was to die" (v. 33). The Christian reader is well aware that the means of his death (ποίῳ θανάτῳ) was crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. The use of πάντας ("everyone") to describe who will be drawn to Jesus lifted up upon a cross indicates the universality of the Johannine understanding of the fruits of Jesus' crucifixion. A myopic focus upon the diachronic in the analysis of the Johannine use of "nation" and "people" in 11:48-52 misses the full significance of that passage within the broader literary and theological setting of the Johannine theme of the universal "gathering" that takes place at the cross.

The theme of "gathering" comes to a climax in 19:25-37. It is beyond the scope of this brief study to evaluate all the scholarly discussion, and important exegetical difficulties, that surround the Johannine account of Jesus' death and its immediate aftermath.³⁹ R. E. Brown said it all succinctly when he commented, "The Johannine crucifixion scene is, in a certain way, less concerned with the fate of Jesus than with the significance of that fate for his followers."⁴⁰ Whatever one makes of the Johannine series of events, *the gift* of the Mother to the Disciple and the Disciple to the Mother, and the generation of a new family (εἰς τὰ ἴδια) "from/because of that hour" (ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας) (vv. 25-27),⁴¹ *the gift* of the Spirit as Jesus brings to perfection the task given by the Father (see 19:30; 4:34; 17:4),⁴² and *the gift* of blood and water flowing from the side of the crucified Jesus (19:32-34), all point to a community founded by Jesus, "lifted up" on the cross.⁴³ A community of believers hears the final remark of the narrator, citing from Zech 12:10: "And they shall gaze upon him whom they have pierced." Within this literary context, the recalling of Caiaphas' words of 11:51 in 18:14 – "It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people (ὑπὲρ τοὺς λαοὺς)" – cannot be understood

39. For more detail to support the affirmations that follow, see Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor*, 127-52; Moloney, *John*, 501-515.

40. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; AB 29-29a; New York: Doubleday, 1966-70) 2:912. See also F. J. Moloney, "The Johannine Passion and the Christian Community", *Salesianum* 57 (1995): 25-61.

41. The use of ἀπο with the genitive can have both a temporal meaning, i.e., the normal understanding of the passage as "from that hour", or a causative meaning, i.e., a more theological "because of that hour", making v. 27 the climax to the theme of the hour that has unfolded across the Gospel (see BDF 113, para. 210). I suggest that both are involved.

42. The Greek παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα should not be rendered (I suspect under the influence of the Markan ἐξέπνευσεν [Mark 15:37; see Luke 12:44], and especially the Matthean ἀφῆσκειν τὸ πνεῦμα [Matt 27:50]), as "He gave up his spirit" (see, for example, RSV, NRSV, JB, NJB). It means "He gave *down* the Spirit." See NAB: "He handed over the spirit." For the discussion, see Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor*, 145-46, and the documentation found there.

43. The remarkable intervention of the narrator in v. 35, whatever one might think of when and how it might have been added to an original Johannine text, insists that the message is for a group of believers. The account of the blood and water is "that you also may believe" (see 20:31).

without the cumulative impact of the unfolding theme of “gathering” (see 10:16; 11:51-52; 12:11, 19, 20-24, 27-33). Jesus’ death for the nation (ἔθνος) and for the people of God (λαός τῶν θεῶν) in both 11:51 and 18:14 has an inclusive and universal significance, transcending Caiaphas’ initial limitation of the effects of Jesus’ death on the Jewish people (ἔθνος). His prophetic voice (see 11:51) says more than he understands: “He did not say this of his own accord.”

The Johannine use of “nation” (ἔθνος) and “people” (λαός) undergoes a development from the former nation and people of God (ἔθνος) to a new people of God (λαός) in 11:48-52, once this passage is read synchronically, in the light of the utterance of the whole Gospel. A synchronic reading, sketched above, indicates that John envisions an extension of the former people of God (λαός τῶν θεῶν). By means of a gathering at the cross, the crucified King founds a new people of God, embracing both Jew (“the nation”) and Gentile. Both are included in the expression “the people of God”. The theological theme of a new people of God reaches beyond semantics in the Fourth Gospel. It is deliberately set between the Prologue’s indication that, despite Jesus’ rejection by his own people (οἱ ἴδιοι) when he came unto his own home (εἰς τὰ ἴδια), all who receive the Word, and all who believe in the Word are given the power to become children of God (τέκνα τῶν θεῶν) (1:11-12),⁴⁴ and the establishment of a new family. A new people of God emerges from the hour of Jesus, when the Beloved Disciple led the Mother of Jesus unto his own home (εἰς τὰ ἴδια) (19:27).

Pancaro posits a new people of God that *replaces* the former people of God. This is not called for, as the theme of “gathering” in which the two-fold Johannine use of “people”, in conjunction with the use of “nation” in 11:48-52, includes both Jews and Greeks (see 11:51-52; 12:11; 19:25-37).⁴⁵ Pancaro claims: “There is no indication in the Fourth Gospel that John is thinking of or writing for Gentile Christians.”⁴⁶ The use of “Israel” in the Fourth Gospel does not point to an inclusive/exclusive reality. Israel and the true Israelite are the recipients of the revelation of God made known through Jesus (1:31, 47; 3:10). It is true that some in “Israel” misunderstand Jesus’ relationship to God’s people (see 1:49;

44. J. W. Pryor, “Jesus and Israel in the Fourth Gospel – John 1:11”, *NovT* 32 (1990), 201-18, separates v.11 from 12. He links v. 10-11 in his argument that τὰ ἴδια and οἱ ἴδιοι refer to Israel, and indicate that the nation is judged as rejecting Jesus, and thus it belongs to “the world”. For Pryor, who accepts vv. 12-13 as the center of a chiastically structured Prologue (see p. 202), vv. 12-18 “is saying something quite specific about the nature of the Christian community vis-à-vis the traditional claims of Israel” (p. 214). Understood, although not stated by Pryor, is that the believing Christian community replaces unbelieving Israel. This study suffers from the lack of consideration of the use of “Israel” elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel.

45. The traditional claim that Christianity “replaced” or “superseded” Judaism has little to recommend it, exegetically or theologically. See Rensberger, “Anti-Judaism”, 144-46. See the valuable survey of this issue in The Editors, “Wresting with Johannine Anti-Judaism”, in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneville, *Anti-Judaism*, 30-33.

46. Pancaro, “The Church and Israel”, 404. See above, note 13.

12:13), but this does not exclude the Jewish nation and its people from God's new people. The Johannine Jesus unequivocally states, "For salvation comes from the Jews" (4:22).⁴⁷ Painter suggests that this is hardly an issue, as there is little room in the Fourth Gospel for the theme of a believing community, given the dominance of the Johannine Christology. I am suggesting that this narrow approach, via the historical-critical analysis of the key expressions used by Pancaro to develop his case, misses an important element in the Johannine Gospel. There is a real sense in which a new nation and people emerges, gathered by the crucified Jesus.⁴⁸ The intense focus upon the expressions *ἔθνος* and *λαός* in 11:45-52 points the reader beyond the limitations of that particular locus in the text. The limitations of a national interpretation of "nation", "Israel", and "people" are transcended as the Son of Man is glorified (12:23; 13:31-32), lifted up on a cross, drawing everyone (*πάντας*) to himself (12:32-33, see 19:25-37).⁴⁹

This brief analysis of the sparse but careful use of "Israel", "Israelite", "people", and "nation" across the Fourth Gospel, in the light of the Pancaro-Painter debate of the 1970s, suggests that the evidence should be read somewhat differently. It is not that "the Jews" are no longer the chosen people of God (see 4:22), and that this privilege now belongs to the Jewish-Christians, cast out of the Synagogue. The issue is more subtle. These expressions, traditionally associated with the national-political reality of the Jewish people, indicate an emerging understanding of the new and universal community of Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles gathered at the cross of Jesus, and founded at "the hour".⁵⁰

"THE JEWS"?

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt yet another survey of the Johannine use of the expression *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* ("the Jews").⁵¹ My interest is to trace whether or not the inclusive use of "Israel", "Israelite", "the people" and "the nation", reviewed above, might shed some light upon this vexed question. It is well known that there is no single meaning which covers all the uses of "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel. The bulk of them are found in negative contexts (see 1:19; 2:13, 18, 20; 5:1, 10, 15, 16, 35; 8:22, 48, 52, 57; 9:18, 22; 10:24, 31, 33; 11:8, 19, 31, 33, 36, 11:54, 55; 12:9; 13:33; 18:12, 14, 31, 36, 38, 19:7, 12, 14, 21, 31, 38, 42;

47. See below, notes 55-56.

48. The fundamental study of the Johannine "gathering" theme remains A. Serra, *Contributi dell'Antica Letteratura Giudaica per l'Esegesi di Giovanni 2,1-12 e 19,25-27* (Scripta Pontificiae Facultatis "Marianum" 31; Rome: Herder, 1977) 303-429.

49. My own analysis led me to this conclusion. It is strongly supported (especially concerning 11:48-52) by Frey, "Heiden", 238-45.

50. The ecclesiological message of 19:25-27 has been well caught by E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (2nd ed.; ed. F. N. Davey; London: Faber & Faber, 1947) 530. For a recent, rich and provocative study of this question, see M. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us The Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001) 179-211.

51. See above, note 1.

20:19). However, there are some which are either neutral (see 2:6; 3:22, 25; 19:20, 40),⁵² or positive (see 3:1; 4:9, especially 4:22; 8:31; 10:19; 11:45; 12:11; 18:20, 33, 35, 39; 19:3, 19; 19:21).⁵³ One could add to this listing of places where the expression οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι appears, the number of important and positive characters in the narrative who belong to the Jewish nation. Among them are John the Baptist, the Mother of Jesus, Nicodemus, the disciples, especially the Beloved Disciple and to a lesser extent Peter, the man born blind, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalene. As the Gospel opens, in a section that runs from Cana to Cana (2:1-4:54), the possibility of a journey from no faith through partial faith to full faith is shown to be possible. This "journey" takes place among Jews (2:1-3:36: the Mother of Jesus, "the Jews", Nicodemus and John the Baptist) and among "non-Jews" (the Samaritan woman, the Samaritan villagers, the Royal official).⁵⁴

The large amount of material in the Fourth Gospel which assesses the response of Jewish people to Jesus, along with the neutral and positive uses of the expression "the Jews", must be taken in to account when assessing the Johannine stance vis-à-vis Israel as a political and religious nation. Crucial in the Fourth Gospel's understanding of Israel are the words of Jesus addressed to the Samaritan woman: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews" (4:22).⁵⁵ These words of Jesus must be interpreted within the "story-time" of the narrative itself. The Samaritan woman has called

52. The "neutral" usage will not be discussed further. It indicates Jewish customs and places, but makes no judgment. For further analysis, linking this usage to the oldest editorial strata in the Gospel, see Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 101-117. Some would question whether 2:6 and 19:20 were "neutral". See the following note.

53. This classification of "negative", "neutral" and "positive" presupposes an exegesis of each text. For example, I regard the association of the words "the Jews" with the feasts as a negative statement, as Jesus perfects those limited celebrations. See also Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 141. Unlike many (e.g. S. M. Schneiders, "Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology and Spirituality in John 11", *Interpretation* 41 [1987]: 44-56; A. Reinhartz, "The Johannine Community and its Jewish Neighbors", in F. F. Segovia (ed.), *What is John?: Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* [SBLSymS 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 124-30; H. J. de Jonge, "The 'Jews' in the Gospel of John", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism*, 255-58), I regard the presence of "the Jews" in John 11:1-44 negatively. See also Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 40-41. Contrary, for example, to Pancaro, *The Law*, 296-302, 315-18, given the irony of the Johannine passion narrative, and despite the limitations of Pilate's use of "the King of the Jews" to address Jesus and to present him, innocent, to "the Jews", I regard this positively. See also Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 147-49. See the places in Moloney, *John*, where these passages are dealt with in detail. For a statistical breakdown of the various passages, somewhat at variance with the above list, see E. Grässer, "Die antijüdische Polemik im Johannesevangelium", *NTS* 11 (1964-65), 76-77.

54. For a detailed presentation of this case, see Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 77-191, and the summary on pp. 192-99.

55. For a survey of the history of exegesis, including contemporary discussions surrounding this key passage, see I. de la Potterie, "Nous adorons, nous, ce que nous connaissons, car le salut vient des Juifs: Histoire de l'exégèse et interprétation de Jn 4,22", *Biblica* 64 (1983), 74-115, and G. Van Belle, "Salvation is from the Jews: The Parenthesis in John 4:22b", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism*, 370-400.

Jesus a Jew (v. 9), and so he is. He speaks confidently of Jewish traditions, bearing within them the authentic presence of God, and he criticizes the Samaritan traditions for not having such authority. Jesus owns his origins among the Jewish people by using the plural "we" (v. 22b: ἡμεῖς προσκυνούμεν: "we worship"). His criticism of the Samaritan traditions is framed in the plural "you" (v. 22a: ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖστε: "you worship"). In terms of the story time, Jesus claims to be part of a long tradition in which God has made himself known within the history of the Jewish people. Not only is Jesus part of that story, but the man whom the woman had earlier called "a Jew" (v. 9) is also the one in whom the revelation of God to Israel reaches its fulfillment. In the Jew, Jesus, a saving revelation has come (see 1:12-13; 3:13-15), and thus salvation is from the Jews. The Johannine Jesus speaks in perfect coherence with the rest of the early Church, which was never ashamed of the fact that its origins lay within the story of the Jewish people.⁵⁶ It is from this perspective that a reader must recognize the many uses of "the Jews" in the Gospel which are positive, and those major characters from the Jewish nation who play such an important role in the Gospel. This is where salvation "comes from" (4:22: ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν: "[salvation] is from the Jews"). For this reason the Baptist can describe the function of his witness to Jerusalem as "that he might be revealed to Israel" (1:31) and, before he stumbles, Nathanael is described as "truly an Israelite" (1:47). The traditions of Israel should have guided Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel (3:10).⁵⁷

For the Fourth Gospel, salvation comes from the Jews, is revealed by a Jew (4:22) and is made known to all Jews who turn to him in belief (see 3:1; 4:9; 4:22; 8:31; 10:19; 11:45; 12:11; 18:20, 33, 35, 39; 19:3, 19, 21). But is this revelation limited to the Jewish race and nation or has, perhaps, the notion of "Israel" been expanded to indicate that both Jews and non-Jews can be regarded as belonging to Israel on the basis of their belief, rather than their national heritage? The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman already answers that question. It culminates in her leading her fellow Samaritans to Jesus, and to their confession: "We have heard for ourselves and we know that this indeed is the savior of the world" (4:42). Across the early pages of the Gospel the Baptist has announced that Jesus has come for the revelation of God to Israel (1:30),

56. See H. Thyen, "Das Heil kommt von den Juden", in D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (eds.), *Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1980) 163-84; Van Belle, "Salvation is from the Jews", 381-93. See also Brown, *John*, 1:172; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, 1:436.

57. One of the surprising weaknesses of Pancaro's treatment of Nathanael (1:47-51) is his insistence that he is the "true Israelite". But the adverb ἀληθῶς is used in v. 47, not the adjective ἀληθινός. In *The Law*, 293 n. 19, he claims that "the difference is negligible". I would argue that the difference is important. The adverb, rendering the meaning that Nathanael was "truly an Israelite" makes him one of many. He models how one can be truly an Israelite – in whom there is no guile. The adjective would single him out as unique (as Pancaro claims), but is not found in the text.

and that promise has unfolded in Jesus' revealing presence, first to Jews: Nathanael (1:47), the disciples (see 2:11), and Nicodemus (3:1-21), then to non-Jews: Samaritans (4:1-42). It culminates in the faith of the gentile official (βασιλικός) (4:46-54).⁵⁸

If Jesus brings the revelation of God to Israel, then the narrative forces the conclusion that "Israel" means more than a religiously and politically identifiable nation. Those who believe in Jesus can claim to belong to an Israel that accepts this revelation. They become children of God (see 1:12; 11:52). As well as the movement of the narrative itself into the non-Jewish world, the indications of 1:12; 1:30, 47 and 11:52 indicate that the boundaries of "Israel" reach beyond the limitations of the Jewish people. In 11:47-52 a subtle shift takes place, from the nation of the Jews to a new people, a new nation, made up of children of God. As long as the chief priests, the Pharisees and Caiaphas speak, expressing their national and political concerns, the nation and the people (vv. 47, 50) refer to the national and political gathering of the Jewish people. Once, however, Caiaphas is credited with prophecy, no longer in control of what he is saying (v. 51a), God's design for a new nation, based on the original Israel but larger than it, must be understood in the use of the same expressions: a "nation" now made up of "children of God" (vv. 51-52). This impression is strengthened by those two occasions when Jews acclaim Jesus as "the King of Israel" (1:49; 12:13). The notion of "Israel" has been broadened, and on his way to the cross where a community will be founded, he must not be deterred by acclaim indicating a different agenda. Jesus cannot be regarded as a national political hero, and that is the meaning of 1:49 and 12:13.⁵⁹ But the revelation of God that takes place in and through Jesus has not lost its roots in the historical and national beginnings of God's saving action in and through the Jew, Jesus. Jews and Gentiles belong to a group of believers who have accepted the revelation brought by Jesus. All belong to "Israel", the recipient of the revelation brought by Jesus (1:31).⁶⁰

Once one is aware of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the community of believers founded at the "gathering" which takes place at the cross, it is clear that in the Johannine view of God's designs the Jews belong to the new people of God. The criterion is no longer national religious or political identity, but belief in Jesus. The negative uses of "the Jews" are to be understood as a consequence of this criterion. *We need to reverse our approach to this question. We should start with the positive presentation of the Jewish characters, the positive use*

58. Not all would accept that the βασιλικός was a Gentile. See, for example, Frey, "Heiden", 230. In defence of the above position, and a survey of the discussion, see Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 182-83.

59. See, the correct interpretation of these passages in Painter, "The Church and Israel", 109-11.

60. Correctly interpreted by Painter, "The Church and Israel", 108, with reference to 1:7: ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ: "that all might believe through him".

of the expression "the Jews" and the intimate link that exists between the Jews and the revelation of God to "Israel". Once this is clear, then it is easier to understand why a group of people, unfortunately also called "the Jews", are consistently presented negatively.⁶¹ From a historical point of view, it is understandable why the Johannine community, now aware of its call to broaden its horizons, both theologically (in and through its Christology) and in its sense of mission to the Gentile world, called these people "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). They were "Jews" who were not prepared to move outside a closed religious system.⁶² But the unfortunate choice of this term has generated centuries of pain for the Jewish people, ancestors also of the Jews who formed the Johannine community.⁶³ At the heart of this essay lies my conviction that, for the Fourth Evangelist, the repeated use of the expression "the Jews" in a negative sense has *nothing* to do with national, political or religious affiliation. It has *everything* to do with the definitive rejection of Jesus as the revelation of God. A group exists within the world of the story that unflinchingly opposes Jesus, and does all it can to thwart his mission. The world "behind" the story that produced this hostile group consisted of ethnically Jewish people, fiercely committed to the re-establishment of Jewish life and religious practice after the devastation of the Jewish War (66-70 C.E.), especially the loss of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. They necessarily came into conflict with the Johannine Christians. The three-fold indication of a banning of the readers of the Gospel from the Synagogue indicates that a division had opened up between the Jews in the Synagogue and the Johannine Christians (see the use of ἀποσυνάγωγος in 9:22; 12:42 and 16:2).⁶⁴ But there were ethnic Jews on both sides of this divide.⁶⁵ Too much has been made in recent

61. From a hermeneutic perspective, many nowadays insist upon the need to keep the whole utterance of the Gospel of John in mind when interpreting this data.

62. On this, see especially Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 121-86.

63. See Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 142-43. As Rensberger states at a later stage in his study: "John serves as a very sobering reminder that words once written leave their control, and that no one can expect to utter violent words without facing a violent consequence" (p. 152).

64. These are the only places in the New Testament where this word appears. There must have been something that had happened to the Johannine believers for the important appearance of this word across the story. The linking of the verb ὁμολογεῖν (to confess or to profess belief in) with ἀποσυνάγωγος in 9:22 and 12:42 heightens this impression.

65. This has often been noted. Most recently, see the excellent remarks of Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 138-43. Rensberger concludes: "[T]o treat John as the product of a religious community already alien to Judaism and bent on overthrowing it fails to recognize the lingering status of the Christian body as a minority group within the Jewish community and subject to discipline by Jewish authorities. It is still as Jews that believers are 'afraid of the Jews', and it is as Jews that the Gospel writer encourages them to show the fearlessness of the blind man in John 9." See further, K. Scholtissek, "Anti-Judaismus im Johannesevangelium? Ein Gesprächsbeitrag", in R. Kampling (ed.), "Nun steht aber diese Sache im Evangelium ..." *Zur Frage nach den Anfängen des christlichen Antijudaismus* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999) 151-81; B. Klappert, "The Coming Son of Man Became Flesh: High Christology and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John?" in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism*, 159-86.

Johannine studies of the possible association of this banning from the Synagogue and a formal decision taken by Rabbi Gamaliel II in the eighties of the first century.⁶⁶ But one cannot explain the Johannine story without accepting that it was written against a background (however recent or remote) of a painful breakdown between two groups in the larger Jewish community. The breakdown may have been very local, but in the world that produced the Johannine Gospel, Jews have rejected Jews from their community.⁶⁷

Although some believed that Jesus was the Christ but were afraid to confess it lest they be put out of the Synagogue (12:42), most acted aggressively and cast out anyone who made such a confession (9:22, 34). These Jews were convinced that Jesus' claims were false (7:10-13, 45-52) and that he was a blasphemer (5:16-18; 19:7). The Johannine story consistently takes a stance against them. They are portrayed as systematically rejecting him and those who follow him (see 15:18-16:4a) and they play an active role in the condemnation of Jesus to death upon the cross (chapters 18-19). These Jews were not part of the new nation and people of God (11:51-52), as they were locked in a closed religious system (11:47-50), and had decided to kill Jesus (11:53). The negative use of the expression "the Jews" must be understood in the light of its historical and literary context. Over and against the christological position of the Johannine community (see 1:1-18), they have decided that Jesus is an imposter. He is not the Messiah, but a sinner whose origins are unknown (9:24-29). They are content to stay where they are, confident that God has spoken through Moses and not through this unknown sinner (9:29). *But they are not the only Jews in the story.* Jesus has come for the revelation of God to all in Israel. This includes Jews (see 1:31) and everyone else who comes to him in faith (see 1:7). I accept that the pastoral problem of respect for the Johannine text on the one

66. The fundamental study, followed by many, was J. L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1979). For a good survey of the discussion, coming to the above conclusion, see P. W. van der Horst, "The Birkat ha-minim in Recent Research", *ExpT* 105 (1993-94), 363-68. See also M. Labahn, *Jesus als Lebensspender. Untersuchungen zu einer Geschichte der johanneischen Tradition anhand ihrer Wundergeschichten* (BZNW 98; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999) 305-77, for a slightly different, but fully documented study, especially as it applies to John 9. For a more literary and theological rejection of Martyn's view, see Reinhartz, "The Johannine Community", 111-38. A close link between the background to the Fourth Gospel and the *Birkat ha-minim* is still maintained by Grelot, *Les Juifs*, 92-96, W. D. Davies, "Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John", in R. A. Culpepper and C. C. Black (eds.), *Exploring the Gospel of John. In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 43-64, and Lingard, *The Problem of Jewish Christians*, 101-24.

67. See D. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 26-27; Moloney, *John*, 9-11. See also Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 125-30. Rensberger rightly insists upon the sociological and subsequently ideological (i.e. theological) importance of the separation between the Synagogue and the Johannine community, however local the process may have been. On the ongoing relationships between Jews and Christians in the Second Century, see J. M. Lieu, *Image and Reality. The Jews in the World of Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).

hand and and respect for contemporary Jewish people on the other is difficult. A variety of solutions emerge. I always use citation marks around the expression "the Jews" in Johannine contexts that are negative. In this way I wish to show that "the Jews" are not the Jews! One must "recognise in these hot-tempered exchanges the type of family row in which the participants face one another across the room of a house that all have shared and all call home".⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

The Fourth Gospel presents a universal call: that Jew and Gentile might believe in Jesus as the unique and saving revelation of God (see 20:31).⁶⁹ The former nation and people of God, once called by the name "Israel", has been transformed by means of Jesus' gathering a new nation and people, and is still called by the name "Israel".⁷⁰ It is possible to misunderstand the full potential of Jesus' revelation to Israel, in an attempt to make him a "King of Israel" (1:49; 12:13). But Jesus exercises his kingship in a fashion which is not of this world (18:36-37), lifted up on a cross (13:14; 8:28; 12:32-33), drawing everyone, Jew and Gentile, to himself (10:16; 11:51-52; 12:11, 19; 24; 32-33). Enthroned as King, he establishes a new family of God, a union of faith and love (19:25-27), gifted with the Spirit (19:30), and marked with the life-giving blood and water that flow from the side of the pierced Jesus (19:34-35). It is a believing community, a Christian Church that gazes upon the pierced one (19:37). The members of the people of "Israel" within the Johannine narrative must make their decision for or against this revel-

68. J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 151. For a perceptive analysis of the "conflicts" behind the Fourth Gospel, see M. Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts As Juridical Controversy* (WUNT 2. Reihe 132; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2001) 212-32. The book needs to be read in its entirety for a full appreciation of these pages. In a fine essay, J. Zumstein, "The Farewell Discourses (John 13:31-16:33) and the Problem of Anti-Judaism", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism*, 461-78, shows that the interpreter must look beyond the struggles between Jesus and "the Jews", and focus upon the concern of the post-Easter Johannine community – the κόσμος (the "world").

69. The "you" addressed by the narrator in 20:31 were neither exclusively Jewish nor Gentile. They were both. On this tendency in the Fourth Gospel to "move from ethnic and synagogal boundaries into the world" see Borgen, "The Gospel of John and Hellenism", 112-14. For the citation, see p. 114.

70. On the background to the development and use of the name "Israel" for God's privileged people, see Pancaro, *The Law*, 294. Rensberger, "Anti-Judaism", 144, sees the use of "Israel" as positive, a designation of "those among the Jewish people who had accepted the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah". He cites 3:10 and 11:47-52 as indication that "all Israel (was) potentially within this group, with only its leadership standing in the way". Parenthesis added. My reading of 11:47-52, along with other passages that deal with the theme of "gathering", suggests that "Israel" may potentially have a more universal meaning. The appearance of the word "Israel" in 1:49 and 12:13 shows that characters in the story might still attempt to understand Jesus within a limited religious and national framework, but that this understanding of the expression does not conform to the Johannine view (see 1:50-51; 12:14-16).

ation. If they decide against God's action in and through Jesus, they remain the Israel, the people and the nation of old (see 1:49; 11:47-50; 12:13). In the light of subsequent Christian and Jewish history, it is unfortunate that the author calls them "the Jews".⁷¹ For John, they are locked within a closed religious system that knows that God has spoken through Moses, but ignorant of who Jesus is and where he comes from (9:29). On the other hand, acceptance of Jesus' revelation of God "gathers" people from all national and religious backgrounds – Jew and Gentile – to form a new Israel, a new people and a new nation (1:31; 11:51-52; 12:11, 19, 32-33; 19:25-37).

71. See the parallel, but further developed, reflections of M. C. de Boer, "The Depiction of 'the Jews' in John's Gospel: Matters of Behavior and Identity", in Bieringer, Pollefeyt and Vanneville, *Anti-Judaism*, 260-280. For different view, see A. Reinhartz, "'Jews' and Jews in the Fourth Gospel", *Anti-Judaism*, 341-56.